

# Inspection of a good school: St Michael's CofE Aided Infant School

School Lane, Mickleham, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6EW

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Inspection date:

26 April 2022

## **Outcome**

St Michael's CofE Aided Infant School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They treat each other with respect, are well mannered and enjoy offering each other support and guidance. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because the staff care about them. They enjoy their lessons and the wide range of opportunities available to them. For example, they like the clubs after school that change every term.

Pupils behave well. They know and follow the rules and routines set out by staff. They play happily together at breaktime and lunchtime. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic about what they are learning. If bullying does happen, it is dealt with by teachers well and stops quickly.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve academically and personally. They have thought carefully about how to help pupils to succeed in different subjects. Teachers plan learning that captures pupils' interests.

Staff know pupils and their families well, and relationships within the school community are strong. The school promotes a strong, caring and nurturing ethos that many parents praised. One pupil expressed the thoughts of other pupils and parents by saying, 'Everyone here has a kind heart.'

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have designed a well-organised and ambitious curriculum that meets pupils' needs. They make sure that the school's Christian values and pupils' personal development underpin learning. Leaders have chosen carefully the knowledge that they want pupils to learn each year, right from when pupils join the school in the early years. The curriculum is taught in a logical order. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in school. Teachers make sure that all pupils are included in the full range of curriculum opportunities.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this to explain new ideas and help pupils to remember what they have been taught. Staff understand the needs of pupils who have SEND very well. They help these pupils to achieve well in different subjects. Pupils enjoy lessons. In most subjects, they are able to explain their learning in detail. They reflect on what they have learned and understand how that helps them to learn new things.

Staff check pupils' knowledge and understanding in all subjects. Typically, teachers use this information to identify what pupils know and where pupils need more support. However, in a few subjects, assessment is not as well embedded as it could be. Occasionally, teachers do not take full account of what pupils already know, understand and can do when planning new learning. As a result, sometimes work is not challenging enough.

Staff promote a love of reading. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to the stories that are read to them. Leaders are determined that all pupils will be good readers. They have prioritised the teaching of reading from the time that children join Reception. Staff teach phonics well. They check carefully that children remember the sounds that letters make. Adults provide effective support if pupils, including those with SEND, fall behind. Pupils enjoy practising reading with books that are carefully matched to the sounds that they know. Staff also ensure that pupils choose books that they can read unaided. This helps to build pupils' confidence and fluency in reading.

Staff make sure that there is very little low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils are well mannered, polite, thoughtful and considerate to each other and staff. Pupils know that they can talk to an adult if they have worries. They feel that their concerns are taken seriously.

Leaders plan a wide range of activities to teach pupils about the world around them. Leaders have worked hard to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures and religions. For example, pupils learn about the festival of Ramadan through the books chosen as part of the reading curriculum. The school provides a range of clubs that pupils enjoy. These change regularly so that pupils can try something new. Pupils benefit from educational visits, both locally and further afield, such as the recent visit to the Natural History Museum.

Staff appreciate the support that they receive from the senior leaders. They value the thoughtful actions taken by leaders that have had a positive impact on managing their workload.

Governance is strong. Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders. This ensures that pupils receive a good quality of education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding. Staff know how to identify and report concerns and do so confidently. Leaders take swift action to address all safeguarding issues that are communicated to them. Leaders know how to find support for pupils and put this in place quickly. The designated safeguarding lead manages and follows up on referrals to external agencies thoroughly. Governors have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They are diligent in keeping abreast of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

Leaders ensure recruitment processes are robust.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Occasionally, in a few subjects, teachers do not take full account of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills when planning new learning. This means that, sometimes, learning is not challenging enough for some pupils. Leaders need to ensure that teachers consistently check carefully what pupils already know and use that information to plan more ambitious learning.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2012.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125170
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200420
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Patricia Hand
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paula Bliss (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmichaels-dorking.surrey.sch.uk">www.stmichaels-dorking.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a Church of England primary school. The school's next section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools is due in the next two years. The last inspection of this type took place in May 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with five governors. A telephone conversation was held with a local authority officer.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views on the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors scrutinised records and safeguarding documentation, including the single central record.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff, including administration staff, teachers and teaching assistants, to understand their knowledge of safeguarding and to consider staff's workload.
- Inspectors took account of the 40 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Shaughnessy

Ofsted Inspector

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